Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

a query analysis process for analyzing a query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query;

a link weighting process for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining the sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein said sum corresponds to the popularity of said text-based object.

2. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 wherein said link weighting process includes a click analysis process for determining a link use statistic for each of said plurality of links, wherein the link use statistic of each said link affects the strength of that link.

3. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 2 wherein said link use statistic is an integer specifying the number of times that that link was used prior to said query analysis process analyzing said query.

4. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 wherein said link weighting process includes a content analysis process for analyzing the relevancy between each of said plurality of Internet objects and said query, wherein the relevancy value of each said Internet object affects the strength of the link to that Internet object.

5. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 wherein said link weighting process includes a link structure analysis process for analyzing the quality of each of said plurality of Internet objects, wherein the quality value of each said Internet object affects the strength of the link to that Internet object.

6. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 5 wherein said link structure analysis process includes an incoming link analysis process for determining the number of objects linked to each of said plurality of Internet objects, wherein the incoming link value of each said Internet object is directly proportional to the number of objects linked to that Internet object, wherein said incoming link value affects said quality value of that Internet object.

7. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 5 wherein said link structure analysis process includes an outgoing link analysis process for determining the number of objects that each of said plurality of Internet objects is linked to, wherein the outgoing link value of each said Internet object is directly proportional to the number of objects that said Internet object is linked to, wherein said outgoing link value affects said quality value of that Internet object.

8. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 wherein each said link strength is a relevancy score.

9. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 8 wherein said relevancy score is a percentage.

10. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 wherein said query is a text-based query and includes at least a portion of the text of said text-based object.

11. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 10 wherein said text-based object is a query.

12. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 10 wherein said text-based object is a document.

13. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 wherein said plurality of links is a user-definable number of links and said popularity predicting process further comprises a link limitation process for defining said user-definable number of links.

14. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 further comprising an object conversion process for converting said text-based object into said query.

15. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

a query analysis process for analyzing a query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query;

a link weighting process for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining the sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein said sum corresponds to the popularity of said text-based object; wherein said link weighting process includes a click analysis process for determining a link use statistic for each of said plurality of links, wherein the link use statistic of each said link affects the strength of that link.

16. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 15 wherein said link use statistic is an integer specifying the number of times that that link

was used prior to said query analysis process analyzing said query.

17. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

a query analysis process for analyzing a query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query;

a link weighting process for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining the sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein said sum corresponds to the popularity of said text-based object; wherein said link weighting process includes a link structure analysis process for analyzing the quality of each of said plurality of Internet objects, wherein the quality value of each said Internet object affects the strength of the link to that Internet object.

18. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 17 wherein said link structure analysis process includes an incoming link analysis process for determining the number of objects linked to each of said plurality of Internet objects, wherein the incoming link value of each said Internet object is directly proportional to the number of objects linked to that Internet object, wherein said incoming link value affects said quality value of that Internet object.

19. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 17 wherein said link structure analysis process includes an outgoing link analysis process for determining the number of objects that each of said plurality of Internet objects is linked to, wherein the outgoing link value of each said Internet object is directly proportional to the number of objects that said Internet object is linked to, wherein said outgoing link value affects said quality value of that Internet object.

20. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

a query analysis process for analyzing a query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query;

a link weighting process for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining the sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein said sum corresponds to the popularity of said text-based object;

wherein said link weighting process includes a content analysis process for analyzing the relevancy between each of said plurality of Internet objects and said query, wherein the relevancy value of each said Internet object affects the strength of the link to that Internet object.

21. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

analyzing a query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query;

determining the individual link strength of each of the plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

determining the sum of the plurality of link strengths, wherein this sum corresponds to the popularity of the text-based object.

22. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method for determining the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein determining the individual link strength includes determining a link use statistic for each of the plurality of links, wherein the link use statistic of each link affects the strength of that link.

23. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method for determining the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein determining the individual link strength includes analyzing the relevancy between each of the plurality of Internet objects and the query,

wherein the relevancy value of each Internet object affects the strength of the link to that Internet object.

24. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method for determining the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein determining the individual link strength includes analyzing the quality of each of the plurality of Internet objects, wherein the quality value of each Internet object affects the strength of the link to that Internet object.

25. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method for determining the popularity of a text-based object of claim 24 wherein analyzing the quality of each of the plurality of Internet objects includes determining the number of objects linked to each of the plurality of Internet objects to determine an incoming link value for each Internet object, wherein the incoming link value of each Internet object is directly proportional to the number of objects linked to that Internet object, wherein this incoming link value affects the quality value of that Internet object.

26. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method for determining the popularity of a text-based object of claim 24 wherein analyzing the quality of each of the plurality of Internet objects includes determining the number of objects that each of the plurality of Internet objects is linked to, thus determining an outgoing link value for each Internet object, wherein the outgoing link value of each Internet object is directly proportional to the number of objects that that Internet object is linked to, wherein this outgoing link value affects the quality value of that Internet object.

27. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method for determining the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein the query is a text-based query and the method for determining the popularity of a text-based object further comprises incorporating at least a portion of the text of the text-based Internet object in the query.

28. (currently amended) The computer-implemented method for determining the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein the plurality of links is a user-definable number of links and the method for determining the popularity of a text-based object further comprises defining the user-definable number of links.

29. (currently amended) Apparatus for popularity inferring, the apparatus comprising digital circuitry configured to perform the following actions ~~A computer program product residing on a computer readable medium having a plurality of instructions stored thereon which, when executed by the processor, cause that processor to~~:

analyze a query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to the query;

determine the individual link strength of each of the plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

determine the sum of the plurality of link strengths, wherein this sum corresponds to the popularity of the text-based object.

30-32. (canceled)

33. (original) A processor and memory configured to:

analyze a query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to the query;

determine the individual link strength of each of the plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

determine the sum of the plurality of link strengths, wherein this sum corresponds to the popularity of the text-based object.

34. (original) The processor and memory of claim 33 wherein said processor and memory are incorporated into a personal computer.

35. (original) The processor and memory of claim 33 wherein said processor and memory are incorporated into a network server.

36. (original) The processor and memory of claim 33 wherein said processor and memory are incorporated into a single board computer.

37. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

an object conversion process for converting said text-based object into a query;

a query analysis process for analyzing said query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query;

a link weighting process for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining the sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein said sum corresponds to the popularity of said text-based object.

38. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

an object conversion process for converting said text-based object into a query;

a query analysis process for analyzing said query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query; and

a link weighting process for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths.

39. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 38 further comprising a link strength summing process for determining the sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein said sum corresponds to the popularity of said text-based

object.

40. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

a search engine for analyzing a query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query and for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining the sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein said sum corresponds to the popularity of said text-based object.

41. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 40 wherein said search engine comprises:

a query analysis process for determining said plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query; and

a link weighting process for determining said plurality of link strengths.

42. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

an object conversion process for converting said text-based object into a query;

a search engine for analyzing said query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query and for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining the sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein said sum corresponds to the popularity of said text-based object.

43. (currently amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 42 wherein said search engine comprises:

a query analysis process for determining said plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query; and

a link weighting process for determining said plurality of link strengths.

44. (currently amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for determining the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

an object conversion process for converting said text-based object into a query; and

a search engine for analyzing said query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query and for determining the individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths.

45. (currently amended): The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 44 wherein said search engine comprises:

a query analysis process for determining said plurality of links to Internet objects relating to said query; and

a link weighting process for determining said plurality of link strengths.